

# Grateful for Gratitude This Holiday Season

Given all that is going on this year, many of us may not be looking forward to the holidays with the same excitement that the festive season usually generates. With a little gratitude, and some positive thinking, we can still get the most out of the season while also improving our overall well-being.

Everyone has times where they feel appreciative or thankful for a person or a situation. These moments of thinking about the past in a positive way give us a good feeling and are the very definition of gratitude. Feeling grateful just happens sometimes. Other times, we must make a special effort to increase how often we feel it. With so many disruptions to our usual celebrations, this holiday season might be one of those times.

## Benefits of Gratitude

Recent studies have found a host of benefits from practicing thankfulness, including:

- Improved heart and kidney function and lower blood-pressure and stress-hormone levels
- Higher levels of optimism and satisfaction with life
- Lower levels of stress and anxiety
- Fewer reports of physical ailments
- Higher motivation to exercise
- Higher levels of personal goal attainment
- Higher levels of alertness, attentiveness and energy
- Stronger emotional support for others
- Increased resilience in the face of hardship

## Ways to Increase Gratitude

Experiencing more gratitude doesn't need to be difficult or time-consuming. Try these ideas and see what works best for you:

- **Make a list.** Write down everything in your life that makes you grateful. Look at this list regularly.
- **Gratitude journal.** Take five minutes each day to think of three things that happened in your life that you are glad you experienced. Then write them down somewhere.
- **Take pictures.** Photograph little things in your everyday life that make you smile.
- **Tell someone.** Whether it's someone you look up to or just someone who makes you happy, take a bit of time to tell him or her that you're glad to have them around.
- **Frame events in a positive light.** We often joke about whether the glass is half empty or half full. Make an effort to see the half-full side of every situation.
- **Think about great holidays of the past.** Draw pleasure from all the wonderful times you have had with friends and family and think about how you will again enjoy those times soon.

## Here when you need us.

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